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OT 617X The Book of Judges

Passover Term 2008—Instructor: Lawson G. Stone



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Open Office Hours: Almost all the Time!

Course description

This course explores the major exegetical issues in the Book of Judges and provides students with opportunities to apply original-language tools to several of the book's salient passages. The primary concern in any exegetical work rests in the attempt to see beyond the limited perspectives of our particular cultural heritages and experience the text of the OT as a witness from a time, place, culture and ethnic location far removed from our own. Once we have learned to *receive* God's word across a cultural and ethnic divide, we become better able to *communicate* our witness to God's word across the cultural divides of our times. So our attention to language, textual matters, style, syntax, literary genres, social settings, etc. is only partly antiquarian. They open up to us how God's word speaks through cultural and ethnic horizons very different from our own. In a world in which ministry must necessarily deal with cultural and ethnic differences, learning to negotiate such differences as an integral part of hearing God's word makes exegesis an effective preparation for living and serving in a diverse world.

The events recorded in the book of Judges occurred and were recalled, recorded, and collected in the midst of historic changes in the life, politics, and culture of ancient Israel. The tribalism that divided the Hebrew People, the oppressions that threatened them, the provincialism that

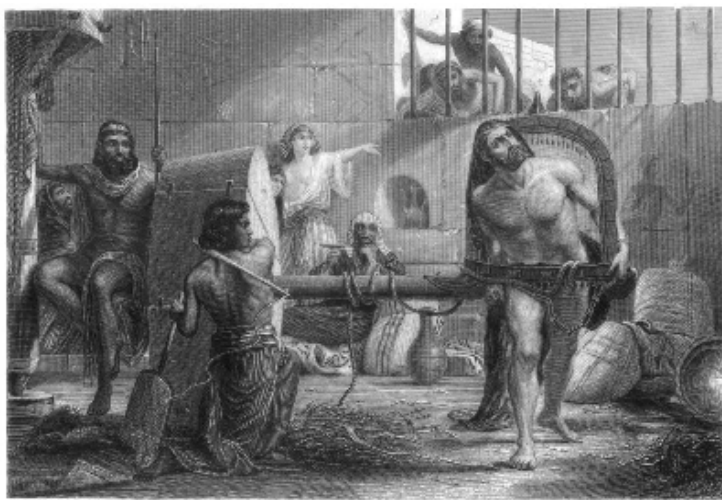
prevented them from responding effectively to their crises, and the recurrent apostasy that diluted their identity and drained their strength all emerge clearly in the book of Judges. Likewise, the various literary genres in the book and the signs of the use and re-use of the materials as the book took shape point to a struggle to receive God's word and reshape it for another generation, place, and circumstance. The tensions and conflicts of tribe, race, empire, culture, and faith that mark the book of Judges recur in contemporary life. Thus time spent with the book of Judges provides a meaningful encounter with problems and possibilities of contemporary ministry. The Spirit of God clearly found rich material for shaping this portion of the inspired scriptures.

The objectives below, as they note matters such as language, text, historical and cultural setting, etc. should be understood as the specific steps necessary toward the fulfillment of this encounter.

Course objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Present an analysis of the main features and interpretive questions of the major segments of the in the book of Judges using the English text;
2. Employ the evidence of grammar, sentence structure, and prose and poetic form, to interpret brief passages of the Hebrew text,
3. Present the significance—etymology, cognate information, range of usage, variation in meanings, implicit imagery—of the key terms in a brief passage by using basic original language word-study tools and techniques,
4. Identify the function of a brief passage of Judges in the framework of its immediate context, its function in the literary flow of the book and in the section of the canon within which it appears,
5. Situate the thematic emphases of specific passages of Judges in the context of the Old Testament's unfolding message and in the context of the Bible as a whole,
6. Demonstrate the impact of representative exegetical methods on the study of Judges, employing relevant scholarly literature, and situating one's own interpretation in the ongoing discussion of biblical interpretation,
7. Illustrate the contribution of exegetical study of the Hebrew text to biblical exposition, instruction, theological reflection, and spiritual formation in order to construct an appropriation of the passage that is integrative and coherent.



Course procedures and requirements

Reading: Students will be expected to prepare for class by *reading the anticipated biblical material in English* and the appropriate section of the *assigned commentaries*, plus selected

additional readings. Specific assignments are given in a separate "Modules" document posted in the course center or attached to a message in the message center.

Participation online is vital. Your regular involvement in online discussion of our interpretation of Judges will be assessed by the professor in terms of how prepared you are, how well you work with the materials of that week's study (text, readings), how carefully you set up your viewpoint, and how you interact with your peers. Typically, you will post a *position statement* or opening position on some question (200 words) I've set (see the Modules), and then you will interact with your colleagues. This assessment, on a scale of 0-5, is necessarily the result of the professor's personal judgment. Note that an absence for any period of time from online discussions is serious and will affect the student's grade. A week of discussion from which a student is absent will count as 0 for that week. If you missed the discussion because of death or illness (your own or a family member), you may make up the absence by contacting me for extra work.

I also hope that our course discussion area will be a place for wide-ranging debate and interaction about all kinds of things. The book of Judges is a favorite of mine precisely because studying it has opened up for me an unbelievable range of other interests, ranging from classical heroic literature (Iliad, Odyssey, Beowulf) to westerns (*Tombstone*, *Open Range*, *Lonesome Dove*, etc) to other variations on heroic themes (*The Matrix*, *Fight Club*, *Second-Hand Lions*, *Lord of the Rings*). On top of that, the geography, topography, and climate of the land of Israel itself has powerfully shaped the events and stories in the book. I have personally walked over several of the "battlefields" of the book of Judges, imagining myself to be Barak or Gideon (dream on, right?) and how the battle might have looked. I have stood in the most likely place where David killed Goliath (not the usual tourist spot) and pondered how the land affected that encounter. I invite you to spend time in maps, historical geographies, and other such sources.

There are major issues to wrestle with in this book. The biggest is VIOLENCE. How do narratives of violence, presenting entertainingly and with approval, get used to shape a peaceable community? How do stories with a strong *individualist* tendency serve to form a *communal* ethos? How do stories celebrating behavior mandated by *no ethical laws* call the reader to live and behave above and beyond the call of the law? How do flawed, weak, even sinful and stupid people end up serving God? Is that service, even when blessed by God, always approved by God? Those are the *easy* questions! Wait'll you see the hard ones! Please feel free to open the game on any of these questions. Toss in your favorite scene from a movie, play, or novel. Some of this we'll do in discussion assignments, but any of these concerns is "game" at any time.

Three major written assignments will be submitted to the professor for grade.

The **First** is a Survey of Judges as a Whole, done following the best IBS principles. A document outlining my expectations for book surveys is posted in the course center.

The **second paper** is a phrase/word study of the expression "spirit of God/Yahweh" in Genesis-2 Kings+1-2 Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah (ie. the narrative tradition), with specific focus on the role of the spirit of God/Yahweh in Judges. What actions are attributed to the spirit of God/Yahweh in Judges? How does the writer evaluate the role of the spirit? What exactly is the spirit of God/Yahweh in the book of Judges? Is the spirit to be equated with the Holy Spirit?

Consult commentaries, Bible encyclopedias, etc. *after* you have done your primary work but integrate these sources into your paper. **8-10 Pages**

The **third paper** is a study of a passage: Judges 14:1-4. Work through the passage in order to set out its basic literary structure. Then identify several critical phrases that will open up the passage, and devote sufficient study to them to be able to set out an interpretation of the passage. **10-12 pages MAX.**

Absolutely Vital Guidelines for Submitting Written Work

1. MS Word files (.doc, not .docx) are the only format that can be accepted
2. Do not submit multiple files. Have all your work in one single file for that module.
3. Submit everything all at once. Don't come back a day later and submit more stuff.
4. Have your NAME in the file itself as well as your e-mail address. Work without a name will not be graded and when the name is clarified, the work will be treated as late.
5. Filename: the file you submit **MUST** be named as follows:
<Lastname><FirstInitial><ModuleNumber>.doc. For example, if I were submitting Module 7, the file would be StoneL5.doc. Please no spaces in filenames. If this format is not followed exactly, the work will not be graded or logged, and will be considered unsubmitted until corrected, and then will be considered late.

Course Grade will be based on a total points system.

Online Participation:	60
Required Reading	60
Book Survey	30
Paper 2	40
Paper 3	50
Total	240

Final Grades will be assigned as Follows:

A	230	240
A-	218	229
B+	209	217
B	202	208
B-	194	201
C+	185	193
C	178	184
C-	170	177
D+	161	169
D	154	160
D-	149	153

F	0	148
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VIDEO CONFERENCING: On AIM my Username is just "Lawson Stone" and on the .Mac interface, I'm "lawsonstone1." Add me to your buddy list and if you ever see that I'm online and "available," please tap me for chat. When my schedule settles down, I will try to find a night each week when I can be at my desk with the chat program up and would love to maintain "live" office hours that way. I also have a Facebook page. I know, I'm ashamed. But there you have it.

Course Materials

General Exegetical Tools from OT 501 (have access to these).

Arnold, Bill T. and John H. Choi. *A Guide to Hebrew Syntax*. Cambridge, 2003.

Elliger, K., and W. Rudolph, eds. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1967-77.

A Hebrew-based Concordance or Biblical Software with full Hebrew root and grammar based search capability (For Wintel: *Bibleworks*, *Logos*; for Macintosh *Accordance*. The latter is sufficient reason to go out and buy a Mac!)

The following are very helpful:

Murphy, T. J. *Pocket Dictionary for the Study of Biblical Hebrew*. IVP. 2003.

Vasholz, R. I. *Data for the Sigla in BHS*. Eisenbrauns, 1983. Provided by instructor.

Required Texts Directly Related to the Book of Judges

Younger, K. Lawson, *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges, Ruth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. This is a traditional commentary in the sense that it provides notes on the text, a discussion of the general issues and information needed to interpret the text, offers an interpretation, and points toward an application.

Gregory Mobley, *The Empty Men: The Heroic Tradition of Ancient Israel*. New York: Doubleday, 2005. The essence of the book of Judges is the collection of hero stories that form its core. This book explores the ancient tradition of heroic narratives and interprets some of the main stories in Judges accordingly. Do you think he succeeds?

Gunn, David M. *Judges: Blackwell Bible Commentaries*. Blackwell, 2005. This commentary takes yet a different approach, dealing instead with the "impact" the book of Judges has had over the centuries. It moves through the history of interpretation, assessing how interpreters of different eras have brought different types of questions to the text, and found different sorts of answers. It also raises a very important question, though: while our questions, methods, and answers are deeply shaped by our own social location and perspective, the question remains: is there a sense in which the text still has an identity apart from our construals of it? Can the text break down or break through our bounded social reality? Can the text *coerce* a reading? Are all interpretations simply descriptions of our own social realities? If so, how can the text mediate an eternal divine word?

Other Required Materials Prepared By the Professor are available at:

<http://web.mac.com/lawsonstone1>

This is my personal website. There you will find a "button" labeled "PUBLIC FOLDER." Click on this and you will come to a page with a set of links. One is called "OT617X Materials" Open this link and *bookmark it*. I will be posting a set of materials here for your use in the course.

Use of the Following Will be Required Throughout the Course

1. General Reference Tools (Consult these *first* among secondary sources)

The Anchor Bible Dictionary. New York: Doubleday, 1992. 6 Volumes. Also available on CD-ROM for all the major biblical research software packages.
New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, 5 vols; ed. W. Van Gemeren, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. Also on CDROM
The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Revised Edition. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988. 4 Volumes. This is NOT THE VERSION FOUND ON BIBLEWORKS! that one is out of date and in the public domain.

2. Lexical and Grammatical Resources

Köhler-Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Brill: Multiple Volumes through late 1990's, also on CDROM) *Note that Brown-Driver-Briggs is Obsolete and not adequate for contemporary exegesis.*
 Scott, William R. *A Simplified Guide to BHS*. Berkley, Calif.: BIBAL, 1987.
 Seow, C. L. *A Grammar for Biblical Hebrew*. Rev. ed. Nashville: Abingdon, 1995.

3. Septuagint Tools

Rahlfs, A. ed. *Septuaginta* by the Stuttgart; Württembergische Bibelanstalt/Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935, 1979.
 Brenton, L. *Septuagint in English*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd., 1851.
 Found in software usually as LXE (*Bibleworks*) or LXX-B (*Accordance*)

Recommended

Jüon P. & T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2 Vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1993. The standard current research grammar.
 Waltke, Bruce and M. O'Connor, *Hebrew Syntax*. Eisenbrauns. 1990.
 Wurthwein, Ernst, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 4th ed., tr. E. F. Rhodes, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

SEE THE SEPARATE "MODULES" DOCUMENT FOR WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

ExL Contact Information:

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program**, contact Dale Hale:

ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2393

For **technical support, library research support, library loans, and ExL media** contact Information Commons:

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Phone: (859) 858-2233

Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

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a. The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml>

2. Materials Requests:

a. To search the library catalog for available materials, click here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml>

b. ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/portions of reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

c. ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

a. ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

a. To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

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ExL Media Copyright Information

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SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE BOOK OF JUDGES

Note: these materials reflect a range of scholarly viewpoint and competence. Some titles are not directly about "Judges" but are relevant to larger issues of interpretation that impinge on the reading of Judges.

Asterisked (*) Sources reflect the professor's personal favorites (for a variety of reasons, not all of which are entirely healthy!) or especially noteworthy contributions

Scholarly Commentaries

- *Block Daniel I. *Judges, Ruth*. NAC. Broadman & Holman 1999, 2002
- Boling, Robert G. *Judges: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1975.
- *Burney, C. F. *The Book of Judges with Introduction and Notes*. London: Rivingtons, 1918.
- Cooke, George A. *The Book of Judges in the Revised Version with Introduction and Notes*. Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. Cambridge: University Press, 1913.
- Garstang, John. *The Foundations of Bible History; Joshua, Judges*. London: Constable, 1931.
- Gray, John. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. NCB. London: Thomas Nelson, 1986.
- Keil C. F. and Delitzsch F: *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*., Translated by James Martin. Commentary on the Old Testament. 10 vols. reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1982.
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- *Moore, George F. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges*. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895, 1976.
- O'Connor, M. P. "Judges" *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, Prentice Hall, 1990: 132-144.
- Soggin, J. Alberto. *Judges: A Commentary*. OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981.

Non-Technical (But Competent) Commentaries

- Armerding, C. E. *Judges A Bible Commentary for Today*. London: Pickering and Inglis, 1979.
- Auld, A. Graeme. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. DSB. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984.
- *Brensing, Terry. *Judges*. Believers Church Commentary. Herald Press, 1999.
- Bruce, F. F. "Judges." *New Bible Commentary*. 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970.
- *Bush, George. *Notes, Critical and Practical. on the Book of Judges. Designed as a General Help to Biblical Reading and Instruction*. New York: Saxton, Pierce, 1844.
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- Goslinga, C. J. *Joshua, Judges, Ruth*. Trans. R. Togtman. BSC. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.
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- *Olson Dennis T. "The Book Of Judges Introduction, Commentary, And Reflections" *New Interpreters Bible*. Abingdon 1998 2:723-888
- Schneider, T.J. (2000) *Judges*, Berit Olam, Collegeville, MN: Liturgical.
- Wilcock, M. *The Message of Judges*. BST. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992.
- Younger, K. Lawson, *The NIV Application Commentary: Judges, Ruth*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

Books On Judges

- Ackerman, Susan. *Warrior, Dancer, Seductress, Queen: Women in Judges and Biblical Israel*. (Anchor Bible Series) Doubleday, New York NY. 1998
- Amit, Y. *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing*, trans.J. Chipman, Biblical Interpretation Series 38, Leiden: Brill, 1999.
- Bal M., *Murder and Difference*, trans. M. Gumpert. Indiana University Press, 1988.
- *Bal, Mieke. *Death and Dissymmetry: The Politics of Coherence in the Book of Judges*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1988.
- Bodine, W.R., *The Greek Text of Judges: Recessional Developments*, Harvard Semitic Monograph Series 23. Chico: Scholars, 1980.
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- Crenshaw, J. *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, A Vow Ignored*, Atlanta: John Knox, 1978.
- Davis, John J. *Conquest and Crisis: Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*: Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books, 1969.
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- Latvus, Kari. *God, Anger, and Ideology: The Anger of God in Joshua and Judges*. JSOTSup, 279. Sheffield Academic Press, 1998.
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- Mayes A.D.H., *Judges*. (Old Testament Guides). Sheffield: JSOT.
- McKenzie John L., *The World of the Judges*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1966.
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- *Webb B.G., *The Book of Judges: an Integrated Reading*. JSOTSup 46. Sheffield, 1987.
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- *Yee, G., *Judges and Method* (Augsburg/Fortress, 1995)

Books On Related Issues in Interpreting Judges

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- Ahlström G.W., *The History of Ancient Palestine*. Minneapolis / Sheffield: Fortress / Sheffield Academic Press, 1993.
- Apte, M.L. *Humor and Laughter: An Anthropological Approach*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985 .
- Bal, M. ed. *Anti Covenant: Counter Reading Women's Lives*, 1989.
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- *Halpern B., *The First Historians*. Harper & Row, 1988.
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- *Noth, M. *The Deuteronomistic History*. Trans. D. Orton. JSOTSup 15. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981. Orig. Germ. 1941, 1957.
- Porter S. et al. (eds) *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, Biblical Interpretation Series 8, Leiden: Brill.
- *Steiner, George. *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. Oxford University Press, 3rd. Ed. 1998.
- *Steiner, George. *Grammars of Creation*.
"Nevertheless, there is, I think, in the climate of spirit at the end of the twentieth century, a core-tiredness. The inward chronometry, the contracts with time which so largely determine our consciousness, point to late afternoon in ways that are ontological - this is to say, of the essence, of the fabric of being. We are, or feel ourselves to be, latecomers. The dishes are being cleared. 'Time, ladies and gents, time.' Such apprehension is the more compelling because it runs counter to the fact that, in the developed economies, individual life spans and expectancies are increasing. Yet the shadows lengthen. We seem to bend earthward and towards night as do plants."
- *Steiner, George. *On Difficulty and Other Essays*. Oxford: University Press, 1978.
- *Steiner, George. *Real Presences: Is There Any Thing in What We Say?* Chicago, 1991.
- *Steiner, George. Review of *Litrary Guide to the Bible*, by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, *The New Yorker* January 11,
- *Sternberg, Meir. *Expositional Modes and Temporal Ordering in Fiction*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1978.
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*Trible, Phyllis. *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984.

Articles and Chapters (See also books noted above)

Judges 1:1-3:6

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 Brettler, M.Z 19890 "Jud 1,1-2,10: From Appendix to Prologue," *ZAW* 101:433-5.
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Ehud

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Deborah-Barak

- Ackerman J.S., "Prophecy and Warfare in Early Israel: A Study of the Deborah-Barak Story," *BASOR*, 220 (1976): 5-13.
 Ackroyd, Peter R. "Composition of the Song of Deborah." *VT* 2 (1952): 160-162.
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 Blenkinsopp J., "Ballad Style and Psalm Style in the Song of Deborah: A Discussion," *Biblica* 42 (1961): 61-76.
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